

**SUMMARY OF THE
PROGRAM POLICY AND STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 11, 1999**

The Program Policy and Structure Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Monday, January 11, 1999, at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) as part of the Fourth NELAC Interim Meeting in Bethesda, MD. The meeting was led by Dr. Marcia Davies of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Committee Chair, Ms. Pauline Bouchard of the Minnesota Department of Health, Division of Environmental Health, was unable to attend the meeting. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to address issues included on the Committee's agenda for this meeting, including reports from the Field Measurements Committee and Agricultural Labs Subcommittee, reviewing changes to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Chapter 1 of the NELAC Standards, and addressing the proposed single glossary.*

INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REVIEW OF AGENDA

As facilitator, Mr. Bruce Harvey reviewed the ground rules governing the meeting and described for attendees the parking lot concept for tabled issues. Dr. Davies then introduced herself and described her previous and current involvement with NELAC, then asked each Committee member to do likewise.

REPORT FROM THE FIELD MEASUREMENTS COMMITTEE

In the absence of Dr. Barton Simmons, Chair of the Field Measurements Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Dan Bivins of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented an update on activities and findings of the committee.

The committee had previously sent a White Paper to the NELAC Board of Directors and the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) regarding sampling standards. This paper contained several options on sampling methods. The committee's recommendation is to require that any entity that performs field sampling adopt NELAC sampling and analytical standards but not be required to obtain NELAC accreditation. This is to encourage dissemination of standards and training of field personnel. While comments have been received from ELAB, the committee is awaiting a response from the NELAC Board of Directors.

The committee is recommending a modified enforcement strategy for sampling and is proposing changes to Chapters 3 and 5. It has also identified references for developing field activity standards, has drafted sampling standards, and is seeking to provide a possible forum for addressing issues related to small laboratories.

The Field Measurements *Ad Hoc* Committee formally requested of the Program Policy and Structure Committee that its status be changed to that of a NELAC Standing Committee and that it be referred to as the Field Activities Committee. The Program Policy and Structure Committee

was in agreement and will propose the following language at the Closing Plenary Session of NELAC IVi:

AField Activities Committee. This committee develops and maintains uniform standards for field measurement and sampling, and coordinates the development of these standards with other standing committees.@

It will be proposed that this language constitute NELAC Bylaws Article VI, Section 3.B.8 and be included in Chapter 1 (Section 1.6.5.1) of the NELAC Standards.

AGRICULTURAL LABORATORIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Paul Kimsey and Ms. Marlene Moore have been actively involved with this subcommittee. Ms. Moore introduced Mr. Dave Scott from Purdue University, representing the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO). Mr. Scott described in detail the function of AAPCO, its relationship to state agricultural laboratories, and how those laboratories might become more involved in the NELAC process.

AAPCO represents state Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) laboratories, state/federal pesticide regulators, and state departments of agriculture. These laboratories analyze animal feed, fertilizer, seed, animal drugs, serums, and pesticides. The majority of their pesticide analyses are performed on manufactured products (formulations) and pesticide residues. Most of the latter are investigation samples related to response to public complaints. Many of these analyses are performed on an emergency basis. Mr. Scott acknowledged that most of these analyses are performed using in-house developmental methods and not validated analytical methods. These agricultural laboratories typically have Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance (QA) Project Plans, and report their Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) data to EPA Regional Offices. There is little funding for these laboratories nor are there any proficiency testing programs for them to participate in.

Mr. Scott expressed some disappointment that the small agricultural laboratory community has not been involved in the development of the NELAC Standards. He also expressed concern that these laboratories do not **A**fit@ well into the current Standards. Many in the audience thought that portions of the current Standards actually fit these laboratories very well and encouraged AAPCO to study the Standards more closely.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NELAC BYLAWS AND CHAPTER 1

Dr. Davies reviewed the currently proposed changes to the NELAC Bylaws (Article VI, Section 2.B.3.a and 3.b) and Chapter 1 (Section 1.6.5.2.3). Each of these changes is related to the duties and functions of Membership and Outreach Committee. There being no discussion, the changes will be recommended as currently proposed.

GLOSSARY

The NELAC Standards previously contained two glossaries that have been merged by the Program Policy and Structure Committee into one. Dr. Tom McAninch led the discussion on the merged glossary and asked for comments on specific references from the audience. Considerable discussion was heard regarding the term **Ablank**. It was agreed that the current definition of **Ablank** be made more generic but that it include a listing of types of blanks (e.g., trip, field, equipment, reagent). Dr. Davies recommended that the committee examine the glossary closely for oversights. Dr. McAninch also addressed written comments on the glossary received from Mr. Jerry Parr.

Dr. Davies sought from the committee and attendees opinions as to where the glossary should be included in the Standards and whether a vote should be required to approve changes. Most wanted it to be included as an appendix to Chapter 1, and wanted votes to be required for approval of changes. Dr. Davies requested that any additional proposed changes from attendees be forwarded to Dr. McAninch in writing by April 1, 1999. This will allow the committee to summarize the changes by May 1, 1999, and have them posted on the NELAC web site by approximately May 15, 1999, so they can be voted on at NELAC V.

There was considerable discussion about possible inconsistent use of the terms **Ashall**, **Ashould**, **Amay**, and **Amust** in the Standards. It was agreed that each term has its rightful place of use.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Carl Kircher, Chair of the NELAC Regulatory Coordination Committee, reported on his committee's interest in assisting Indian Tribal Nations. He reported that, to the best of his knowledge, the Program Policy and Structure Committee has been designated to assist the Indian Tribal Nations in their NELAC involvement. Dr. Kircher invited the committee and attendees to attend a presentation by Dr. Roger Bucholz, to be given in Wednesday's meeting of the Regulatory Coordination Committee meeting. Dr. Davies suggested that the Program Policy and Structure Committee may need to coordinate with the Board of Directors regarding possible changes to the Constitution and Bylaws to ensure inclusion of the Indian Tribal Nations and reminded the committee that any required changes must be made by Wednesday, January 13, 1999.

Mr. Scott Darley of the Department of Defense (DOD) asked that the criteria for membership on the Accrediting Authority Review Board (AARB) as contained in Section 1.6.3 of the Standards be more clearly defined. This request is among other DOD comments previously supplied in writing to Dr. Kenneth Jackson, Chair of the NELAC Board of Directors. Mr. Darley agreed to resurrect these comments and forward them to Ms. Bouchard.

A lengthy discussion was held of the NELAC **scope of accreditation** as described in Section 1.8 of the Standards. There was concern that the NELAC Standards do not contain a comprehensive list of minimum required analytes for which each state must be able to certify laboratories. It was strongly recommended that the Program Policy and Structure Committee in turn recommend that

such a listing be developed. Mr. Matt Caruso, Chair of the National Database *Ad Hoc* Committee, commented that his committee is resolving a similar issue with a list of approved/accepted methods.

Much discussion was heard regarding the potential inability of a laboratory's primary accrediting authority to offer accreditation for a particular analyte for which the laboratory seeks certification. It was strongly recommended that the current NELAC requirement that a laboratory must first apply to its primary accrediting authority be stricken and that the laboratory be allowed to defer to a secondary accrediting authority offering the desired certification(s). There was agreement that a standardized application form be developed for all laboratories and that the Transition Committee be asked to develop such an application. It was agreed that the laboratory application should contain a master list of possible analytes and that each state should be required to list the analytes for which it intends to certify laboratories.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROGRAM POLICY AND STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
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Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	The committee will propose draft language at the Closing Plenary Session of NELAC IVi to change the Field Measurements Ad Hoc Committee to a standing committee called the Field Activities Committee.	January 13, 1999
2.	The committee will perform further examination of the unified glossary for oversights/omissions, etc.	Ongoing
3.	The committee may need to coordinate with the Board of Directors regarding inclusion of the Indian Tribal Nations as NELAC voting members.	Ongoing
4.	Recommend that the Transition Committee oversee development of a standardized laboratory application form.	January 13, 1999
5.	Develop a position on the agricultural laboratories and language for Chapter 1 if needed.	April 1, 1999

**PARTICIPANTS
PROGRAM POLICY AND STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
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Name	Affiliation	Address
Bouchard, Pauline Chair (absent)	Div of Env. Health, MN Dept of Health	T: (612) 215 - 0710 F: (612) 215 - 0979 E: pauline.bouchard@health.state.mn.us
Davies, Marcia Acting Chair	US Army Corps of Engineers	T: (402) 697 - 2555 F: (402) 697 - 2595 E: marcia.c.davies@usace.army.mil
Burton, Arthur (absent)	Sequoia Analytical Laboratory	T: (650) 364 - 9600 F: (650) 364 - 2048 E: burton@sequoialabs.com
Clark, Stephen	USEPA/OW	T: (202) 260 - 7159 F: (202) 260 - 4383 E: clark.stephen@epamail.epa.gov
Kimsey, Paul	CA State, Department of Health Services	T: (510) 540 - 2408 F: (510) 540 - 3075 E: pkimsey@hwi.cahwnet.gov
Luna, Roberto (absent)	City of Longmont Water/Waste Water	T: (303) 651 - 8666 F: (303) 682 - 9543 E: colwwtp@lanminds.net
McAninch, Thomas	Eastman Chemical Co.	T: (903) 237 - 5473 F: (903) 237 - 6395 E: twmcan@eastman.com
Moore, Marlene	Advanced Systems Inc.	T: (302) 834 - 9796 F: (302) 995 - 1086 E: mmoore@advancedsys.com
Rosecrance, Ann	Core Laboratories	T: (713) 329 - 7414 F: (713) 895 - 8982 E: arosecrance@corelabcorp.com
Harvey, Bruce (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: (919) 541 - 6573 F: (919) 541 - 7386 E: bwh@rti.org
Reading, Helen (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: (202) 728 - 2044 F: (202) 728 - 2095 E: hmr@rti.org